

Message

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To: R8 SLT [R8_SLT@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: EPA Celebrates 50 Year of Progress, Dedicates Conference Center to First Administrator

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In newsroom.

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From: EPA Press Office <press@epa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 3:00 PM
To: Sullivan, Melissa <sullivan.melissa@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA Celebrates 50 Year of Progress, Dedicates Conference Center to First Administrator

EPA Celebrates 50 Year of Progress, Dedicates Conference Center to First Administrator

WASHINGTON (December 2, 2020) - Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) celebrates 50 years of protecting human health and the environment in the United States, on tribal lands, and around the world. As part of the 50th anniversary commemoration, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler hosted an event at EPA's headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he unveiled the new Ruckelshaus Conference Center in honor of EPA's first administrator, the late William D. Ruckelshaus, and highlighted the many accomplishments of the EPA over the past 50 years.

"EPA has delivered on our mission to protect human health and the environment for every American, regardless of their zip code," said **EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**. "Since 1970 air pollution has fallen more than 77 percent, down at least 7

percent in the last 4 years alone. Under the Trump Administration, our nation's air, water and land are the cleanest and safest they have been in our lifetimes. This is something to celebrate."

Since 1970, EPA has made significant progress in protecting the nation's water, cleaning up our air and land, and safeguarding human health. Historic milestones include setting the nation's air quality standards to protect human health, regulating the quality of public drinking water, creating the Superfund program to clean up hazardous waste sites, protecting children from exposure to lead-based paint, and recently, launching the first ever United States Federal Strategy for Addressing the Global Issue of Marine Litter and new, modern National Recycling Goal of 50% by 2030.

Over the past year, EPA has highlighted 50 years of progress through monthly themes featuring the work of numerous EPA programs that have led to positive environmental outcomes for our nation and improved processes to better serve the public. Here is a recap of some of the accomplishments highlighted throughout the year:

Office of Water

"Over the last 50 years, EPA and its partners have done an outstanding job working together to protect public health, restore America's water resources, build water infrastructure, and support the water economy," **said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water David Ross**. This progress is exemplified by the improvement in protecting our nation's drinking water. Before EPA, 40 percent of drinking water systems failed to meet even the most basic health standards while today, EPA has standards for more than 90 contaminants and 92% of community water systems meet all health-based standards. Looking ahead, under an [Executive Order](#) signed by President Trump in October, the agency is poised to further accelerate progress by modernizing America's water infrastructure, improving the nation's water resource management, and creating opportunities for American water workers.

Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

For more than 50 years, EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention has taken action to advance chemical safety across the country. "Thanks in part to EPA's extensive efforts over the past 50 years, we have greater awareness of the chemicals being used in our communities, we have put in place more safeguards than ever, and we have seen exposure to toxic pollution significantly decrease," **said Alexandra Dapolito Dunn, EPA Assistant Administrator for Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention**. Notable achievements include the recovery of the nation's bald eagle population thanks to EPA's 1972's cancellation of virtually all uses of DDT and cutting the amount of lead in children's blood by 95% as a result of multiple federal laws and regulations, including EPA's Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992. Today, EPA remains on the forefront addressing the country's largest public health and environmental challenges. Since the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency in January, EPA has worked to ensure that Americans are aware of and have access to effective surface disinfectant products to use against SARS-

CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. EPA's pesticides program continues to protect public health and the environment while promoting a safe, abundant, affordable food supply. In 2020, EPA registered over 17 new active ingredients, most of which were classified as reduced-risk pesticides, and nearly 200 new uses of existing pesticides, providing growers with the tools they need to protect the country's food supply. The agency has also continued aggressive implementation of the 2016 Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which amended the Toxic Substances Control Act. Over the past four years, the agency has set up the processes, policies, and resources to review the over 41,000 existing chemicals in the marketplace today and any new chemicals that companies want to bring to market. Through tireless efforts, expert career staff taken the necessary time to do this work in a way that increases transparency, produces high-quality assessments using sound science, and ensures that Americans are protected from unreasonable risks. This work will benefit public health and the environment and facilitate innovation in chemistry for years to come.

Office of Air and Radiation

For 50 years, the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) has worked across all levels of government and with private partners to protect our nation's air. "Today, our national air quality is the cleanest since we started recording," said **Anne Austin, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation**. "From 1970 to 2019, emissions of six key pollutants have dropped 77%, while the economy has grown 285% - proving that clean air policies and a robust economy can go hand in hand." Since the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, EPA has pioneered innovative, successful market approaches for curbing emissions from power plants to address acid rain and reduce air pollution transported across state lines. EPA air standards have also significantly reduced industrial toxic air pollution and, over the past 50 years, dramatically cut dangerous tailpipe emissions from vehicles and engines. Through multiple partnership programs, EPA has made strides in promoting energy efficiency, cutting greenhouse gases, and helping to heal the earth's protective ozone layer. EPA is a leading resource in promoting a safe indoor air, helping to reduce exposure to mold, smoke, and radon. In addition, by setting standards for radiation pollution emissions, and maintaining a robust monitoring system for radiological emergencies, EPA's air team works to protect public health from radiation pollution and ensure emergency preparedness. Learn more about EPA's air achievements here: www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/50th-anniversary-clean-air-act

Office of Land and Emergency Management

"Throughout the Agency's history, EPA's land programs have worked to fulfill its mission of protecting human health and the environment. I'm proud of the work we've accomplished to refocus the Agency on these important programs that directly benefit communities across the country," said **Assistant Administrator Peter Wright for the Office of Land and Emergency Management**. EPA's land cleanup programs continue to address spills and the impacts of natural disasters, as well as remediating contaminated land and encouraging land reuse and revitalization. EPA's work and investments in the cleanup process turn formerly written-off land into community assets

across the country and remain an integral component of EPA's core work. EPA's land cleanup programs serve as a model for how contaminated land can be addressed and how hazardous materials should be managed to avoid contaminating the land.

Office of International and Tribal Affairs

EPA is committed to working together with Tribal Governments to support the implementation of federal environmental laws consistent with our federal trust responsibility, and EPA's 1984 Indian Policy. At the same time, EPA works with other federal agencies, international organizations, and foreign governments to address bilateral, regional, and global environmental challenges while advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives. "The EPA salutes the progress made by tribal nations and acknowledges the importance of our continued commitment to improved access to safe drinking water and other environmental protections in Indian country. These are all the more important as we face the Covid-19 pandemic," **said Chad McIntosh, EPA Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs.** "Pollution does not respect international boundaries. We continue to work closely with our government partners in Mexico, Canada, and key partner countries around the world to provide current and future generations with a healthier environment and stronger economy." Read more about EPA's tribal accomplishments at <https://www.epa.gov/tribal/50th-anniversary-timeline>

Office of Policy

As the primary policymaking arm of the Agency, the Office of Policy has served as the backbone of the EPA's ability to meet its mission of protecting human health and the environment. "Throughout EPA's history, the Office of Policy has a unique role in working across the entire agency and with our interagency partners, serving as a critical unifying body for robust decision-making at EPA - providing sound analysis, developing innovative regulatory and permitting solutions, and fostering internal and external partnerships—to meaningfully advance environmental protection," **said Brittany Bolen, EPA's Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy.** OP has long provided cross-cutting, multi-disciplinary skills and expertise supporting air, water, land, and chemical programs. In recent years, OP's portfolio has expanded to include regulatory policy and management, environmental economics, community revitalization, environmental justice, environmental permitting, climate adaptation, sector-based engagement, and voluntary standards.

Office of Research of Development

For more than 50 years, EPA research has provided the scientific foundation for the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. "EPA researchers have continuously developed the data, knowledge, and tools needed to meet our country's most critical environmental and public health concerns," **said Jennifer Orme-Zavaleta, EPA's Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science and EPA Science Advisor.** Historically, EPA researchers have addressed many major public health concerns, such as lead contamination, air pollution, drinking water quality, and chemical safety. Today, EPA remains at the forefront of investigating emerging environmental

challenges, including the mitigation of SARS-CoV-2 in the environment; the impacts of wildfire smoke on air quality, and contamination from widely-used, persistent chemicals such as Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). EPA science is also helping develop innovative monitoring and assessment tools to assist states, tribes and communities as they respond to today's complex environmental challenges.

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Throughout EPA's 50 year history, enforcement and compliance assurance have played integral roles in the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. "The best intentions of our environmental regulations would mean little if people didn't comply," said **Susan Bodine, EPA's Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance**. "On EPA's 50th Anniversary, we celebrate the historical contribution and continuing innovation of our enforcement and compliance assurance programs." Over the past 50 years, EPA's enforcement and compliance programs have continuously sought and found ways to achieve better results; several examples are developing the ECHO database to share enforcement information with the public; developing and refining self-audit policies to bring more facilities into compliance; and developing tools to encourage and accelerate cleanup at Superfund sites. Today, building on this history of innovation, EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance employs a holistic approach and employs a wide range of tools to advance compliance.

Office of Children's Health Protection

The EPA plays a significant role in protecting children and keeping them safe where they live, learn, and play. Over the last 50 years, through an agency-wide effort that includes the Office of Children's Health Protection, the EPA has worked to fulfill its mission by providing a cleaner, healthier environment, especially for pregnant women, infants, and children who are in the most vulnerable life stages. "As we celebrate EPA's 50 years of protecting human health and the environment, we would be remiss to not recognize the many actions EPA has taken to improve children's environmental health," said **Amanda Kasper, Senior Advisor to the Administrator**. "A significant example is reducing children's exposure to lead. Our dedication to this work has not been the result of working in silos rather, a direct reflection of extensive collaboration across the EPA and our federal family." Through cross-governmental collaborations, public partnerships, rulemaking processes, enforcement actions, and targeted outreach, EPA has made tremendous gains to reduce lead exposure and associated harms under the Trump Administration's December 2018 *Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts* (Action Plan). For more information on the Action Plan, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/federal-action-plan-reduce-childhood-lead-exposure>

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

"I am pleased that OCFO has been a proud partner in supporting the agency in carrying out its mission. Supporting EPA through effective financial and performance management has always been a priority for our office. We are especially proud that the

agency has received a clean audit opinion for the 21st consecutive year,” **said David Bloom, Deputy Chief Financial Officer**. Over the past 50 years there have been many changes in the way federal agencies are required to manage and report performance, as well as financial operations. In 1990 the Chief Financial Officers Act modernized the government’s financial management system and strengthened reporting requirements. Then in 1993, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) followed in 2010, with the GPRA Modernization Act, directed agencies to improve their program management by developing 5-year strategic plans, long-term goals, performance measurements and to report annually on achievements. Then, the DATA Act of 2014 brought unprecedented transparency. Once managing EPA’s budget using calculators and paper, the agency now almost completely operates with digital financial tools. EPA takes pride in paying its bills and employees on time, and continuing to look for the most prudent and effective ways to manage the budget.

Office of the General Counsel

Over the past five decades the EPA Office of General Counsel (OGC) has been the nation’s premier environmental law office. As the Agency’s chief legal advisor, OGC advises on implementation of the nation’s most impactful environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, as well as federal laws covering ethics, employment, civil rights, access to information, appropriations, grants and contracts. OGC manages the vitally important work of implementing the Freedom of Information Act through the National FOIA Office, as well as protecting external civil rights within the External Civil Rights and Compliance Office. “OGC staff are a community of people who care deeply about this office as an institution and have been integral in advancing EPA’s mission over the last 50 years. They have done so with professionalism, camaraderie, and a deeply engrained work ethic. OGC’s stellar results, whether in response to national environmental events from hurricanes to oil spills or advancing novel issues to the Supreme Court, speak for themselves.” **said David Fotouhi, Acting General Counsel**. OGC lawyers provide critical input to rules, regulations, and guidance documents; provide legal support for the issuance of permits, the approval of state environmental programs, and the initiation and litigation of enforcement actions; and in tandem with the Department of Justice represent the Agency in court challenges to agency actions, appeals of enforcement cases, and Supreme Court litigation. This work, through numerous Administrations, has led to the development of the canon of modern environmental law.

Office of Mission Support

“OMS has worked side by side with our program partners to ensure they have what they need to carry out the mission of protecting human health and the environment. Supporting the programs has always been a priority of our office, whether it has been advancing the use of technology or getting funds out to our grantees. We will continue to aim to support our partners in the next 50 years,” **said Donna J. Vizian, Principal**

Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Mission Support. In 2018, the Agency created the Office of Mission Support (OMS) by combining the Office of Administration and Resources Management and the Office of Environmental Information to align EPA's core mission support functions, and to improve efficiency, coordination, and customer experience for internal customers, stakeholders, and the public. OMS's key functions include the protection of EPA's facilities and other critical assets nationwide, acquisition activities, grants management, human capital, information technology and information management activities, and management of EPA's IT investments. Since the merger, improved collaboration across mission support functions has led to efficiencies in hiring and onboarding new agency employees. In 2020, with the oversight from the Chief Information Officer, EPA significantly improved its Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) scorecard grade and was among nine out of 24 agencies to score a B+ or higher. EPA is committed to continuous improvements to critical Agency processes and mission support functions.

Looking ahead to the next 50 years

As EPA closes out our year-long commemoration of the 50th anniversary, we're celebrating future environmental leaders with a look at EPA programs that help foster environmental education among U.S. students, including the President's Environmental Youth Award (PEYA), Environmental Education (EE) Grants Program, and our long-standing partnership with Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA).

Since the establishment of the original Environmental Education Act of 1970, the PEYA Program has recognized outstanding community-level environmental projects by K-12 students for almost 50 years. Today, as part of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990, PEYA continues to promote awareness of natural resources and encourages positive community involvement. This year, 35 students who worked as a team or individually on 13 projects received the PEYA. Their stewardship projects, conducted in 2019, display a commitment to learning, to protecting natural resources, and to engaging their communities in environmental protection.

In 2020, EPA selected 35 organizations to receive over \$3.2M to support environmental projects nationwide under the EE Grants Program. The funding, ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000, was given to organizations that provide environmental education activities and programs. This year's grantees will conduct project activities in 35 states and Puerto Rico. Through these EE grants, organizations will help expand the public's awareness of environmental challenges, strengthen their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues, gain skills to identify and help resolve challenges, and increase participation in activities to improve our environment.

EPA's People, Prosperity and the Planet (P3) Program is an annual, two-phased competition that challenges college and university students to research, develop, and design innovative projects that address environmental protection and public health

challenges. Interested student teams can apply for a P3 Phase 1 grant through February 9, 2021.

Tomorrow, as part of the 50th anniversary celebration, EPA is partnering with GSUSA to host two virtual events to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders.

To register for the K-5 event, visit:

https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1403255&tp_key=fea4c86693

To register for the 6-12 event, visit:

https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1403256&tp_key=e5dd804af7

Lastly, this year, Administrator Wheeler announced the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on the creation of an EPA/BSA special award to be awarded as part of a new environmental education awards and recognition program. The EPA-sponsored award will challenge Scouts to learn about, explore, and conserve the world around them as part of an awareness campaign to educate the public about EPA's accomplishment during its first 50 years and develop the vision for the next 50 years.

Follow along as we highlight recent student award winners on social media throughout the month with the hashtag #EPAat50.

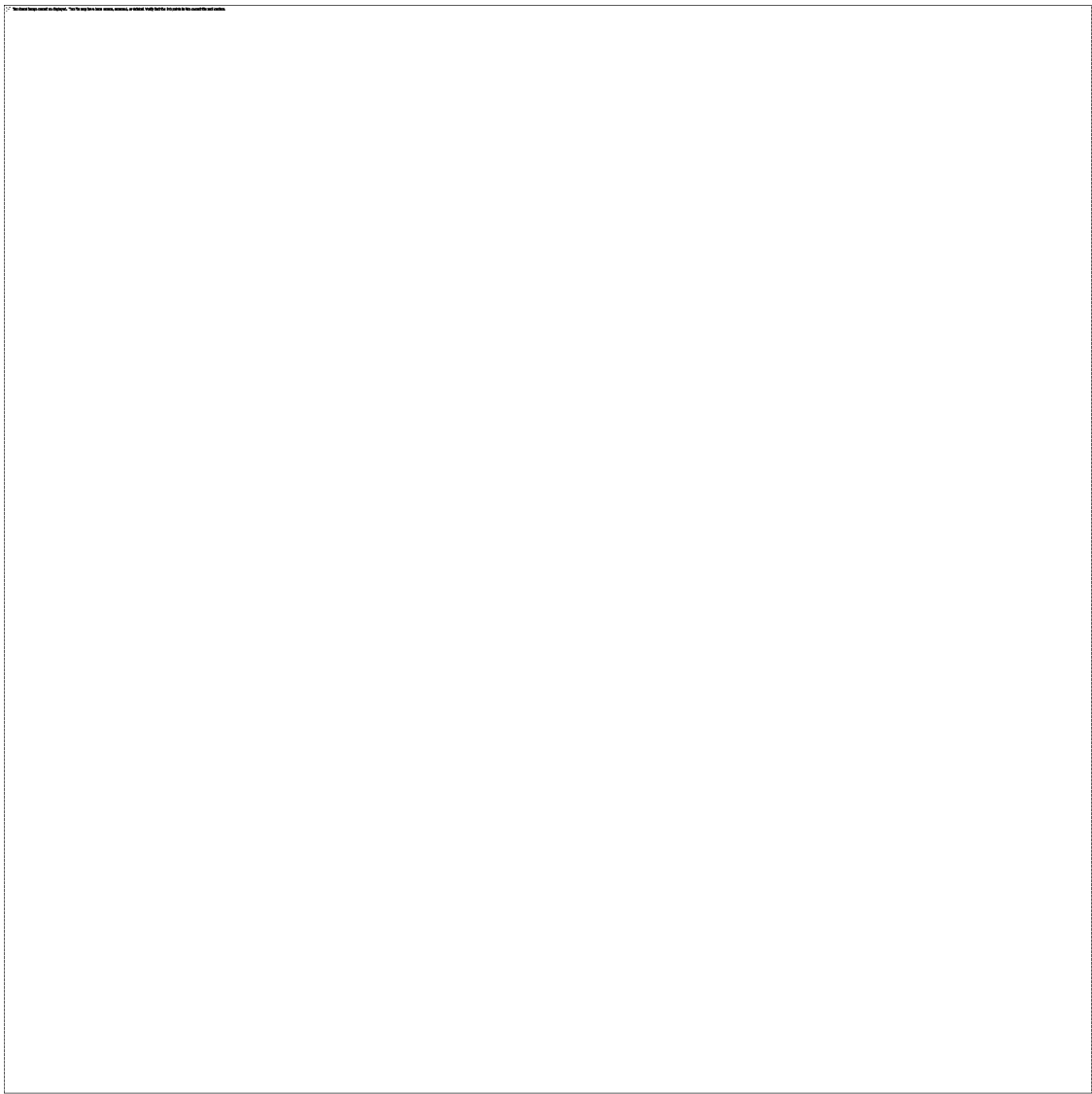
Background:

EPA was established on Dec. 2, 1970, to consolidate into one agency a variety of federal environmental responsibilities including research, monitoring, standard setting, and enforcement activities to ensure environmental protection while simultaneously safeguarding human health. The agency's first administrator, the late William Ruckelshaus, took the oath of office on Dec. 4, 1970.

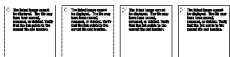
For more on EPA's 50th anniversary, visit: www.epa.gov/50

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